

REMARKS

Restriction requirement

In the Office Action of March 24, 2006 the Examiner asserts, in a restriction requirement, that the present application contains claims directed to six distinct species, Species I (Figure 1); Species II (Figure 3); Species III (Figure 4); Species IV (Figure 5); Species V (Figure 6); and Species VI (Figure 7).

Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the requirement for restriction as discussed below.

While Applicants concur with the Examiner's finding that Species I -VI as originally filed are patentably distinct, Applicants traverse the restriction requirement for the following reasons. As conceded by the Examiner, Claims 1, 30 and 55 are generic to Figures, 1 and 3-7. See page 2, line 2 of the Office Action. Hence, the restriction requirement should be withdrawn.

Applicants further submit that 35 U.S.C. § 121 authorizes, but does not require, the USPTO to restrict an application to one invention if two or more independent and distinct inventions are claimed in one application. In view of the related filed of technology and in view of the expenses that would be imposed upon the Applicants by multiple patent applications and multiple patents, it is submitted that restriction requirements should be issued only when absolutely necessary.

Therefore, Applicants request that the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action of March 24, 2006 be withdrawn. However, as required under 35 USC § 121, the Applicants provisionally elect Species I wherein Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 11-13, 30-34, 36, 38, 40-42 and 55-58 are readable on Figure 1.

Additionally, Applicants expect the Examiner to use a consistent test with respect to what matters are obvious and what matters are unobvious throughout the prosecution of this application. Because the Examiner is adopting a particular standard for patentability in this case in terms of the election/restriction requirement, Applicants will expect that the same test be used throughout the prosecution of this application if the Examiner does not withdraw the election/restriction requirement made in the official action.

The traversal of the restriction requirement and the remarks regarding the traversal are being submitted without prejudice. Neither the traversal of the restriction requirement nor the remarks regarding the traversal shall be interpreted as disputing the Examiner's finding that Species I-VI are patentably distinct.

It is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Allowance of the application at an early date is solicited.

Conclusion

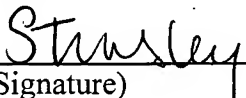
In view of the above, allowance of the pending claims is respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 12-0415. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, then the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136 (a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 12-0415.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Post Office with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on

April 24, 2006
(Date of Deposit)

Shannon Tinsley
(Name of Person Signing)


(Signature)

April 24, 2006
(Date)

Respectfully submitted,



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